

What is claimed is:

1. A method of using a mail sorting machine to provide a transportable container containing mail that is arranged in delivery point order and separated by delivery point, wherein the mail sorting machine is capable of routing each piece of mail input therein to one of a plurality of temporary storage compartments, and wherein the transportable container includes a plurality of compartments, with each compartment of the transportable container being associated with one of the plurality of temporary storage compartments, the method comprising:

receiving a plurality of mail pieces, wherein each mail piece in said plurality of mail pieces is addressed to a delivery point on a mail carrier's route;

associating each one of the plurality of temporary storage compartments with a delivery point on the mail carrier's route such that no two temporary storage compartments of the plurality are associated with the same delivery point;

for each mail piece in the plurality of mail pieces, determining the delivery point to which the mail piece is addressed and storing the mail piece in the temporary storage compartment associated with the determined delivery point; and

for each said temporary storage compartment, transferring the mail pieces stored in said temporary

storage compartment to the compartment of the transportable container with which said temporary storage compartment is associated.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing the transportable container to the mail carrier.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of attaching a shoulder strap to the transportable container, thereby providing a strap that makes it easier for the mail carrier to carry the transportable container.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the transportable container is expandable.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the expandable container is an accordion file.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of positioning the transportable container underneath the plurality of temporary storage compartments prior to transferring the mail from the temporary storage compartments to the transportable container.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the transferring step comprises the step of opening the bottom of each temporary storage compartment.

8. A method for delivering mail, comprising:  
using a mail sorting machine to create N groups of mail, wherein each of the N groups of mail needs to be delivered to a different delivery point, wherein N is greater than 1;

providing a transportable container having N or more compartments;

automatically placing each of the N groups into a compartment of the transportable container such that no two of the N groups are placed into the same compartment; and

providing the transportable container to a mail carrier, wherein the mail carrier carries the transportable container while delivering mail to delivery points on a mail route.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein each compartment of the transportable container is expandable.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the transportable container is an accordion file.

11. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of storing each of the N groups of mail in a

temporary storage compartment prior to automatically placing the groups into a compartment of the transportable container, wherein no two of the N groups of mail are stored in the same temporary storage compartment.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of automatically placing each of the N groups into a compartment of the transportable container comprises the step of automatically transferring the contents of one of the temporary storage compartments into one of the compartments of the transportable container.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of positioning said one of the compartments of the transportable container underneath the floor of said one of the temporary storage compartments prior to dumping the contents of said one of the temporary storage compartments into said one of the compartments of the transportable container.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein, prior to the step of automatically dumping the contents of said one of the temporary storage compartments into one of the compartments of the transportable container, the method comprises the step of automatically opening the floor of said one of the temporary storage compartments.

15. A mail sorting system, comprising:  
a mail sorter that sorts mail;  
a plurality of temporary storage compartments,  
each of said plurality of temporary storage  
compartments being able to receive and store mail that  
has been sorted by the mail sorter; and  
a transportable, expandable container, the  
transportable, expandable container comprising a  
plurality of expandable compartments, wherein  
each said expandable compartment is associated  
with one of the plurality of temporary storage  
compartments such that no two of said expandable  
compartments is associated with the same temporary  
storage compartment.

16. The mail sorting system of claim 15, wherein  
the expandable container is flexible.

17. The mail sorting system of claim 15, wherein  
an opening of each said expandable compartment is  
positioned underneath one of the temporary storage  
compartments.

18. The mail sorting system of claim 17, wherein  
an angle between a side wall of a temporary storage  
compartment and a corresponding side wall of the  
expandable compartment that is associated with said  
temporary storage compartment is greater than 90  
degrees but less than about 135 degrees.

19. The mail sorting system of claim 18, wherein each of said temporary storage compartments has an openable floor.

20. The mail sorting system of claim 19, wherein the openable floor is a hinged floor.